

Remarks/Arguments

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 have been revised.

Claims 1-8 remain pending in the application.

35 U.S.C. ¶112, second paragraph

By this Amendment, the typographical error in the dependency of claim 8 has been corrected.

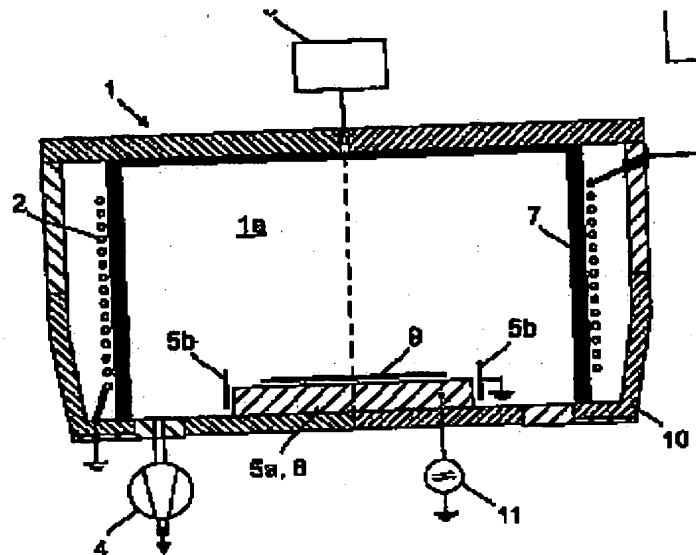
35 U.S.C. ¶103

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶103 as being unpatentable over Weichart et al. (US 2003/0075522) in view of Francis (US 6465353). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the now-pending claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states:

“[Weichart et al.] includes a **dark space shield 5b** circumjacent the periphery of the location for preventing the presence of the plasma between the shield and the periphery of a substrate in the location whilst allowing processing of the substrate.” (Emphasis added.)

The electrode 5b referenced by the Examiner is illustrated in FIG. 1 of Weichart et al., a relevant portion of which is reproduced below:



As shown, the electrode 5b is radially spaced from an outer edge of both the substrate table 8 and the substrate 9.

In contrast, according to the presently claimed invention, a dark space shield is provided which overlies a peripheral portion of an upper surface of the substrate during processing of the substrate. This is shown, by way of example, in FIG. 4 of the present application. As illustrated in FIG. 4, the shield 7 overlies a peripheral upper surface portion of the substrate 1 which is held in place by the chuck 2.

Applicants do not acquiesce to the propriety of the Examiner's proposed combination of references. However, it is clear that Weichart et al. and Francis, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest at least the follow features of independent claims 1 and 7:

Claim 1. "... a dark space shield disposed on the zone side of the chuck overlying a peripheral portion of the upper surface the substrate"

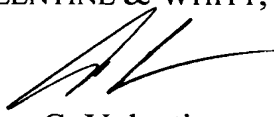
Claim 7. "... locating a dark space shield overlying the periphery of the outwardly facing face of the clamped substrate"

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 1-8 define over the prior art.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 1-8 now present in the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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